

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 025

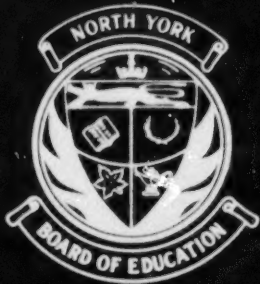
TM 830 053

AUTHOR Cassidy, Phil
TITLE North York Self Concept Inventory: Junior High Level. Research Report.
INSTITUTION North York Board of Education, Willowdale (Ontario).
PUB DATE Feb 82
NOTE 20p.; For related documents, see TM 830 051-052.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Foreign Countries; Junior High Schools; *Junior High School Students; *Self Concept Measures; *Self Esteem; Student Evaluation; *Test Construction; *Test Norms
IDENTIFIERS Canada; *North York Self Concept Inventory (Crawford)

ABSTRACT

The norms are reported for the North York Self Concept Inventory administered to a sample of junior high school students. The 25-item instrument was designed to examine aspects of self-esteem related to the school environment, self or peers, with high discriminatory power between high or low scoring groups of students. The items are declarative statements of self-concept requiring "true" and "not true" responses. Two classes each of seventh- eighth-, and general and advanced ninth-grade students in 21 North York junior high schools comprised the norm sample. The statistical results and distribution of scores at each grade level are presented. A group of 10 practical suggestions that can be used by classroom teachers to enhance a positive self-concept is included. (CM)

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RESEARCH REPORT

ED226025

North York Self Concept Inventory

Junior High Level

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Phil Cassidy
February, 1982

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Introduction

For some years, it has been known that self-esteem is significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning. The achievement of a favourable attitude towards oneself has been regarded as an important part of a student's ability to function successfully in school. Research in the last twenty years has consistently indicated a positive correlation between self-concept and academic achievement. Students who attend school feeling good about themselves and their abilities are more likely to succeed, while those who see themselves and their abilities negatively are less likely to do well in school.

Over the past few years, many educators in North York have expressed interest in and concern for their student's feelings about themselves. Responding to this interest, Research Department staff have developed paper and pencil inventories designed to provide a measure of a pupil's self-esteem within the school environment. These instruments are suitable for elementary pupils¹ (Primary and Intermediate Self Concept Inventory), junior high school students² and secondary students³.

The North York Self Concept Instrument used to gather information from junior high school students was last normed in our junior high schools in 1973 and since that time changes have occurred both in the instrument itself and in the student population. This report presents current norms on the 25 item instrument presently in use. Since identification of pupils with negative self concepts is only a first step, we have also included a section describing ways in which teachers can enhance their students' self-esteem. For those educators who wish to pursue further reading in the area of self concept, a bibliography containing some of the recent literature on self concept is included. These materials are from the Minkler Library.

Development of the Inventory

The preliminary pool of items was drawn from three existing self concept inventories, the 10X Self Appraisal Inventory, Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory and Comfort's Self-Esteem Scale, which were administered to a group of North York Junior High School Students in grades 7, 8 and 9. The preliminary form consisted of 32 items. In selecting the items for

1 Shapson, S.M., Virgin, A.E. & Crawford, Patricia. Development of an Instrument to Measure Self Concept in Schools. October, 1971.

Crawford, Patricia. Norms for the North York Self Concept Inventory, Intermediate and Primary Levels. July, 1977.

2 Taylor, Wayne. North York Self Concept Inventory, Junior High Norms. April, 1973.

3 Cassidy, Phil, Broks, Gloria. North York Self Concept Inventory, Secondary School Norms. April, 1978.

inclusion in the final version of the inventory, the following two conditions were imposed:

- 1) the content of the item must deal mainly with aspects of self-esteem related to the school environment or feelings about self or peers.
- 2) the item must demonstrate a high degree of discriminatory power between high scoring and low scoring groups of students.*

Based upon these criteria, several items which did not significantly discriminate between students with high and low self concept scores were eliminated. The final version of the inventory, consisting of 25 items, was established for use in the schools.

Description of the Inventory

The North York Junior High Self Concept Inventory (see Appendix) is comprised of 25 items which are declarative statements, e.g. "I am good in my school work". "There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could". Students are asked to indicate whether they feel each statement is "true" or "not true" for them, most of the time. One point is given for each response which indicates a positive self concept. The scores in the inventory can range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 25. It can be administered in about 15 minutes and easily scored by a classroom teacher.

Norm Sample

During the months of October and early November 1981, the inventory was administered to a sample of students from each of 21 Junior High Schools in North York. Two classes at each of the grade 7, 8 and 9 levels participated in the norming. The classes given the inventory were selected by school personnel, the only stipulation being that those classes be representative of the school population at the grade 7 and 8 level and identified as general or advanced, where this was possible, at the grade 9 level. The administration and scoring of the self concept instrument was done by Research staff.

Availability

Interested educators may obtain additional information about the North York Junior High Self Concept Inventory and/or arrange for copies of the Inventory that may be administered to students by contacting a Research Consultant at 225-4661.

* Stanley, Julian C. Measurement in Today's Schools. Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. pp. 200-201.

Results

Norms

Table 1 contains the overall mean and standard deviation for each of grades 7, 8 and 9 as well as the number of students tested at each grade.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation on the North York Junior High Self Concept Inventory.

M E A N	G R A D E S				
	7	8	(Advanced Level) 9	(General Level) 9	Total Gr. 9
	17.0	16.6	17.3	15.2	16.7
Standard Deviation	4.7	4.9	4.2	4.3	4.3
Sample Size	1402	1179	546	339	1173*

- * A number of grade nine students are included in the total of results for all grade nines but not in either advanced or general levels, since some schools do not designate grade nine students as either general or advanced.

Distribution of Scores on the North York

Junior High Self Concept Inventory

Tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 give the distribution of self concept scores for each of grades 7, 8, 9 advanced level, 9 general level and total grade 9. These tables can be used to assess an individual student's relative position with respect to other students at the same grade level. The possible range of scores, 0-25, has been divided into nine intervals. The second column in each table gives the percentage of students tested who received a score in a particular interval. The third column gives the cumulative percent. Thus, for example, from table 2 it can be seen that 16% (column 2) of the grade 7 students received a score of 12, 13 or 14 and that 31% (column 3) of the grade 7 students received a score of 14 or less.

Table 2

Grade 7

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	5	101
21 - 23	21	86
18 - 20	25	75
* 15 - 17	19	50
12 - 14	16	31
9 - 11	9	15
6 - 8	4	6
3 - 5	2	2
0 - 2	0	0

* MEAN 17.01

Table 3

Grade 8

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	6	101
21 - 23	19	95
18 - 20	23	76
* 15 - 17	19	53
12 - 14	18	34
9 - 11	8	16
6 - 8	5	8
3 - 5	3	3
0 - 2	0	0

* MEAN 16.60

Table 4

Grade 9 (Advanced Level)

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	5	101
21 - 23	19	96
18 - 20	30	77
* 15 - 17	24	47
12 - 14	14	23
9 - 11	7	9
6 - 8	2	2
3 - 5	0	0
0 - 2	0	0

* MEAN 17.30

Table 5

Grade 9 (General Level)

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	2	100
21 - 23	8	98
18 - 20	20	90
* 15 - 17	29	70
12 - 14	20	41
9 - 11	13	21
6 - 8	6	8
3 - 5	2	2
0 - 2	0	0

* MEAN 15.23

Table 6

Grade 9 (Total)

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	4	101
21 - 23	17	97
18 - 20	26	80
* 15 - 17	25	54
12 - 14	16	29
9 - 11	9	13
6 - 8	3	4
3 - 5	1	1
0 - 2	0	0

* MEAN 16.72

Suggestions For Enhancing Student Self-Esteem

In his book, *The Antecedents of Self-Esteem*, Dr. Stanley Coopersmith defines self-esteem as follows:

"by self-esteem we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy". In short, self-esteem is a "personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself".
(Coopersmith, 1967, p. 5).

Students who attend school feeling good about themselves and their abilities are the ones most likely to succeed and those who see themselves and their abilities negatively are less likely to do well in school. Dr. Coopersmith maintains that self-esteem is a better predictor of a student's future success in school than intelligence.

Students with a high or positive self concept are generally characterized by self-confidence, self-acceptance, high achievement, enthusiasm and high motivation while those students with low or negative self concepts tend to lack self-confidence, are low achievers, lack enthusiasm and motivation.

Identification of the student's self concept is only the first step. There is much teachers can do to enhance the self esteem of students. Some ideas or suggestions that can be used by classroom teachers to improve or maintain the positive self concept of students can be found on the following pages. Most of these suggestions come from the book by J. Canfield and H.C. Wells, 100 Ways to Enhance Self Concept in the Classroom.

Guess Who I Am?

This can be used as a get-acquainted activity or a getting-to-know-you activity later in the year. It focuses everyone's attention on one person in a healthy way and gives that person a moment in the spotlight.

Have your students write out some biographical information that describes them but does not make it too obvious who they are. Include such things as hobbies, talents, major trips they have taken, unusual things about their family, their special and unique qualities, and so on.

When each person has done this, collect the cards and read them while the class attempts to guess who is being described.

Include a card of your own!

Collage of Self

Instruct your students to make a collage entitled "Me!" They should collect and cut out pictures, words, and symbols that are representative of themselves - things they like to do, things they own and/or would like to own, places they've been, people they admire, feelings they've experienced, ideas that are important to them etc. Then they are to paste these pictures, words, and symbols onto a sheet of construction paper to make a collage. Instruct the students not to sign them.

After the individual collages are completed, display them in the classroom. First, have the students try to guess who made each collage. Next have each student explain to the class all the items in her/his collage. Note for the class that the collages are all somewhat different - unique - just as each person, while having much in common with all others, is a different and unique individual.

Note: Try to have a lot of magazines available for the students; the greater the variety of magazines, the better. Perhaps the students could bring a selection from home.

You could follow this up by having the students write a poem entitled "Me!".

Bragging

Bragging is related to a sense of pride which is related to self concept.

Ask the students to form groups of five or six members. Tell them that each person has two or three minutes to boast about anything he/she feels like in his/her life: accomplishments, awards, skills, things he/she does well, personal characteristics etc.

This activity usually results in everybody feeling very good about her/himself, as well as creating a heightened sense of group rapport.

It is important to receive recognition and positive support for what one does. This exercise provides a legitimate forum for disclosing those things about one's self that are positive and growth-promoting. If a person is to become fully self-actualizing, it is important for her/him to express her/his positive as well as negative feelings. However, our society, does not provide much opportunity for this; bragging is generally frowned upon. Beware of all the ways that bragging may come out as "put downs":

He's really a stuffed shirt.

If his head gets any bigger, he won't be able to wear a hat.

She's the most self-centered person I know.

You may wish to ask the students to share whatever feelings they have about the bragging they just did. Were they comfortable or uncomfortable bragging? Were they comfortable or uncomfortable listening to others brag? Did they feel their stories were less/more spectacular than those of the others? Were there any particular people whose stories they resented or admired? What did they learn about themselves doing this exercise?

Commercial for Oneself

Methods of selling products are hardly foreign to this generation, but how many have ever considered advertising their own strengths and skills? As a self-enhancing activity have the students make advertisements and commercials to sell themselves. They have the option of designing a magazine or newspaper advertisement, a poster, a billboard sign, a brochure, a radio or television commercial, or any other form of advertising they can think of (sweepstakes, coupons, etc.)

You may wish to permit two or more students to work together in a team; for example, one student might be a good artist, another a good writer or photographer.

When students have completed their ads and commercials, take a period to share them all with the entire class. We suggest that contests, judging and prizes be avoided; they only create unnecessary competition that can lead to feelings of inadequacy and resentment among those who do not win.

Four Drawings - Who Am I?

Getting students to do some introspection about themselves can encourage a more positive self-concept. As one examines ways of overcoming obstacles that block one's growth, and is able to move closer to fulfilling the goals one hopes to achieve, one's self esteem cannot help but be raised.

Ask the students to divide a piece of paper into four equal sections. Tell them that they are going to draw four pictures depicting the symbolic answers to four questions you are going to have them ask themselves. (You might wish to offer them an option of using written, rather than pictorial form, if that seems more useful to them).

Ask them to close their eyes. Give them a moment to relax and to let go of any emotions they may be feeling at the moment. Ask them to clear their minds so that they can get in touch with messages from within themselves. Tell them to imagine a blank movie screen in the middle of the forehead. Tell them that you are going to give them a question to ask themselves, and that they should let an image be projected onto their movie screen that will represent or symbolize the answer. As soon as they have seen the image (no matter what the image is, or how unrelated it may at first seem), they are to draw it in the upper left hand section of their papers. The later drawings will go in the remaining sections. Have them number each picture in order.

The four questions are:

1. Where am I?
2. Where do I want to go?
3. What obstacles get in the way of letting me get where I want to go?
4. What inner quality (qualities) will I need to develop to overcome these obstacles?

Allow about eight to ten minutes for each question and drawing. After they have completed all four drawings, ask them to share them in groups of three or four.

It is important for the students to be made aware of how important it is for us to learn to deal with obstacles to our own growth. We know that exploring and building on successes and achievements leads to increased self-esteem and greater opportunities to fulfill our potentials. Learning how to turn negatives i.e. obstacles, mistakes, or failures into positives can only enhance our self-image and our growth. In small groups, encourage the students to look at the obstacles that get in their way, and to help each other to brainstorm ways of turning their obstacles and negatives into positives.

Weekly Reaction Sheets

Part of enhancing a student's self-concept is helping him become more aware of the control he actually has over his daily life. Weekly reaction sheets help students see how effectively they are using their time.

Hand out a sheet with the following questions:

Name _____ Date _____

1. What was the high point of the week?
2. Whom did you get to know better this week?
3. What was the major thing you learned about yourself this week?
4. Did you institute any major changes in your life this week?
5. How could this week have been better?
6. What did you procrastinate about this week?
7. Identify three decisions or choices you made this week. What were the results of these choices?
8. Did you make any plans this week for some future event?
9. What unfinished personal business do you have left from this last week? How long have you been carrying it? How long do you plan to carry it?
10. Open comment:

At the end of a six-week period, you should return the reaction sheets to the students. Students may volunteer to talk about any or all of the questions. Ask them to try to summarize any patterns they can discern in their responses to the questions. Ask them to make a series of "I learned ..." statements after their review of their sheets.

After one six-week period has elapsed, we find it interesting and profitable to have the students construct a new weekly reaction sheet based on what they feel are important areas to be examined in their lives.

If your students have a journal, you may prefer to incorporate the ideas from this exercise into their journal writing, or you might ask them to do the "Weekly Reactions Sheets" and then write what they learned about themselves from doing these into their journals.

I Want to Be

Ask the students to list some people whom they admire very much. They may use names of any person whether historical, fictional, living, or dead. Ask them to write a brief essay or give a brief discussion about the person they have chosen. What qualities does that person possess? Why is he or she to be admired?

Then ask the students to compare themselves to the person they have chosen to emulate. Ask them what they would have to do to become like that person. What changes would they have to make? How could they go about making them?

Help the students set personal goals for achieving these desired changes. Ask them to share their goals with the class. Have them set deadlines for the completion of their goals. Ask them to report on their goals when the deadline arrives. Having students involved actively in working on making changes for themselves allows them to experience enhanced self-esteem.

Words That Describe Me

Ask your students to write down three words that describe themselves. Given thoughtful attention, any three words that come to mind are appropriate. They can be descriptive of physical, emotional, mental, personality, or character traits.

When they have done that, ask them to turn the paper over and write three words they wish described themselves.

Now have each person take one of the three words on his second list and describe specific behaviors that that kind of person exhibits. For example, Charlie says, "I want to be kind." What specific behaviors do "kind" people exhibit?

They help people in distress:

Take food to someone who is hungry.
Mow the lawn for a neighbor who is injured or ill.
Baby-sit temporarily for a working mother while she finds a replacement for a "permanent" sitter who quit.

What else do "kind" people do?

They are considerate of other's feelings:

Sally says, "I hate doing the dishes!" A kind person may respond, "Let me help you."
Billy spills milk on the floor and Ben says, "Billy you sure are clumsy!" A kind person might retort, "No, he's not clumsy, he simply spilled his milk!"

Your class will need some help being specific enough to do any good, so give some examples on the board using words from a couple of students' lists.

When each student has completed listing specific behaviors for one of his words, ask him to use that word as a goal. Use the behaviors as some suggested ways of meeting that goal. If Charlie wants to be "kind" he can immediately start to practice some of the behaviors he has listed and can begin to look for other opportunities as well.

This exercise develops self-esteem only if people work at doing something about their goal. You can help assure this by having a five-minute session once a week in which students state their goals and give examples of something they've done to help accomplish them.

Pride Line

Pride is related to self-concept. People enjoy expressing pride in something they've done that might have gone unrecognized otherwise. Our culture does not encourage such expressions and it is sometimes difficult for people to actually say, "I'm proud that I ..."

Ask each student to make a statement about a specific area of behavior, beginning with "I'm proud that I ..." For example, you might say, "I'd like you to mention something about your writing style or your work habits that you're proud of. Please begin your response with "I am proud that I ...". Students may pass if they wish.

Below are some suggested items for use in this exercise.

1. Things you've done for your parents.
2. Things you've done for a friend.
3. Work in school.
4. How you spend your free time.
5. About your religious beliefs.
6. How you've earned some money.
7. Something you've bought recently.
8. How you usually spend your time.
9. Habits you have.
10. Something you do often.
11. What are you proudest of in your life.
12. Something you have shared.
13. Something you tried hard for.
14. Something you own.
15. Thoughts about people who are different from you.

IALAC

The IALAC Story is told to illustrate how one's self-concept can be destroyed by others. If done with feeling and imagination, it can be a very powerful and moving experience.

Take a sheet of paper and write the letters IALAC (pronounced I-ah-lack) on it in large bold print. Holding this to your chest so that the students can see it, tell them, "Everyone carries an invisible IALAC sign around with them at all times and wherever they go. IALAC stands for "I am lovable and capable." This is our self-concept, or how we feel about ourselves. The size of our sign - or how good we feel about ourselves - is often affected by how others interact with us. If somebody is nasty to us, teases us, puts us down, rejects us, hits us, etc., then a piece of our IALAC sign is destroyed.

(Illustrate this be tearing a corner piece off the sign.) I am going to tell you a story to illustrate how this happens in everyday life." Then proceed to tell the students about a boy or girl who is the same age they are. Pick a name that no one in the class has. As you tell the story, try to be as emotional and dramatic as you can without burlesquing it too much. An outline is provided below. You will have to fill it in with your own imagination. Some teachers we know have the children help create the story as they go along. As you describe each event that negatively affects the student's IALAC sign, tear another piece of the sign off until at the end you are left with almost nothing.

A possible outline for the IALAC story is as follows. Feel free to adapt, add to, change, and embellish it in any way you want:

A seventh-grade boy named Michael is still lying in bed three minutes after his alarm goes off. All of a sudden his mother calls to him, "Michael, you lazy-head, get your body out of bed and get down here before I send your father up there!" (rip!) Michael gets out of bed, goes to get dressed, and can't find a clean pair of socks. His mother tells him he'll have to wear yesterday's pair. (rip!) He goes to brush his teeth and his older sister, who's already locked herself in the bathroom, tells him to drop dead! (rip!) He goes to breakfast to find soggy cereal waiting for him. (rip!) As he leaves for school, he forgets his lunch and his mother calls to him, "Michael you've forgotten your lunch; you'd forget your head if it weren't attached!" (rip!) As he gets to the corner he sees the school bus pull away and so he has to walk to school. (rip!) He's late to school and has to get a pass from the principal who gives him a lecture. (rip!)

Continue the story through the school day with appropriate examples. Some possibilities are:

Forgetting his homework.
Getting a 68 on a spelling test.
Being called on for the only homework question he can't answer.
Making a mistake in reading so that all the kids laugh.
Being picked last to play ball at recess.
Dropping his tray in the lunchroom, with everybody applauding.
Being picked on by bullies on the way home from school.
Being referred to as "Hey you!" in gym class.

You can think of other examples or get the students to help you.

When Michael gets home from school some typical negative events might include not being able to watch the baseball game because his mother is watching her favorite soap opera or because he has not yet finished his homework, or being told to wash the dishes for the third night in a row because his older brother has band practice, etc.

End the story by showing Michael going to bed with an IALAC about as big as a quarter! When you finish, ask the students to discuss the following questions:

How does your IALAC sign get torn up? What things affect you the most? What do you do that destroys the IALAC signs of others - in school, family, ect.?

How do you feel when your IALAC sign is ripped? When you rip someone else's?

What can we do to help people enlarge their signs rather than make them smaller?

The class might continue the exercise for a few days, or a week, by having the students wear IALAC signs and actually rip them apart anytime anyone said or did something damaging to their self-concept. Whenever a sign is ripped, have the class stop at that moment and discuss what happened. The students might even be encouraged to try it with their families. The students can have fun with it, and learn an incredible amount both about themselves, and how they communicate with others, at the same time.

Note: Some exercises in the Guidance Resource Book could be of use. Of particular value would be sections of Self-Awareness - p. 71; Life Line, p. 87; Best Friend, p. 109; Making a Personal Contract, and Social Relationships - Friends, Peer Pressure.

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Books

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- Purkey, William S. Self-Concept and School Achievement. Prentice-Hall, Inc. New Jersey, 1970.
- Purkey, William S. Inviting School Success: A Self-Concept Approach to Teaching and Learning. Wadsworth Pub, California, 1978.

Journal Articles

- Campbell, Lloyd. "Every Student a Success: Improving Self-Image to Increase Learning Potential" in NASSP Bulletin, January 1981, pages 76-78.

This article offers specific activities for teachers to use to help students feel successful and develop a positive self-image.

- Coopersmith, Stanley and Silverman, Jan. "How to Enhance Pupil Self-Esteem" in Today's Education. NEA Journal, April 1969, pages 28-29.

This article, which rests on the assumption that there is a direct correlation between level of self-esteem and academic and personal growth, suggests ways in which a teacher can enhance a student's self-esteem.

- Ferris, W. "Raising Student Self-Esteem (for a change)" in English Journal, March 1971, pages 379-381.

- Folgate, C. "A Teacher's Responsibility in Child Self-Esteem: An Administrator's View" in Illinois Teacher, March/April 1978, pages 173-176.

How teachers relate to their students will have an effect on their social, emotional, and intellectual growth; the article discusses the characteristics and the significance of the relationships between the teacher and the student.

Frey, D. and Young, J. "Self-Concept Continuum for Understanding Student Behavior" in NASSP Bulletin, September 1979, pages 27-33.

This article gives a clear explanation of the reasons behind problem behavior, and the factors that help to create negative or positive self-concept; several specific suggestions are listed which will help the teacher work with the student to raise that student's self concept.

Hare, B. "Self-Concept and School Achievement: The Role of the Teacher" in Illinois Teacher, March/April 1978, pages 170-172.

Johnston, J.H., Markle, G.C., and Means, H.W. "What Research Says to the Practitioner - About Self Concept and School Performance, Part II" in Middle School Journal, May 1981, pages 22-24.

This article includes a summary of Coopersmith's findings on the relationship between high self-esteem and resisting social pressures to conform, as well as creatively and independently handling problems and situations. Students with higher self-esteem can deal more effectively with changing situations, and communicate a pleasant set of emotions, as well as lessening feelings of violence.

Quick, D. "Toward Positive Self-Concept" in The Reading Teacher, February 1973, pages 468-471.

According to the author's findings, teachers with positive attitudes can be most effective in helping students develop positive self concepts; this article suggests some specific strategies for building self-concept in the classroom.

Rhoades, S. and Strickland, B. "A Flip Side Look at Self-Concept" in Clearing House, December 1980, pages 158-159.

This is a useful article for helping the teacher learn to see the 'problem' students more favorably - and thus, do more to help them learn effectively.